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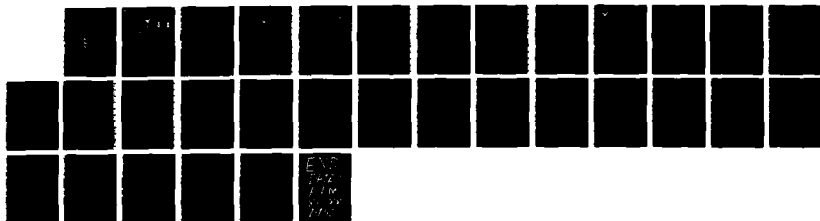
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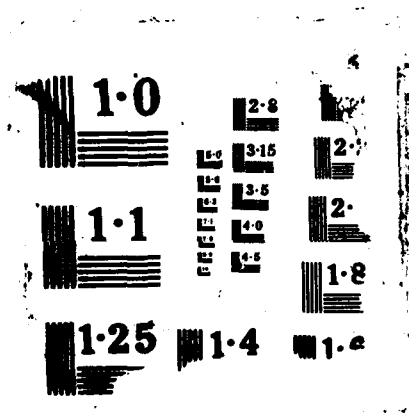
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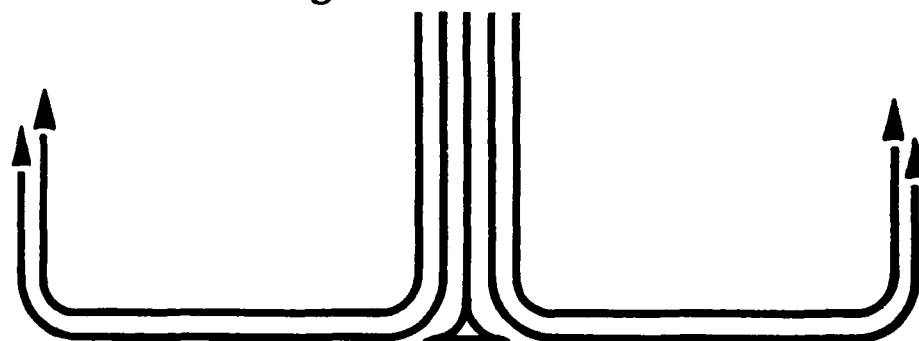
STUDENT REPORT

EUROPEAN TROOP STRENGTH:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

MAJOR RAYMOND E. VARNEY

88-2675

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AUTHOR(S) MAJOR RAYMOND E. VARNEY, USAF

FACULTY ADVISOR MAJOR RAYMOND E. CONLEY, 3823STUS

SPONSOR DR FREDERICK J. SHAW, JR., Air Force Historical Research Center

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<p>Congress imposed ceilings on the number of military personnel assigned in Europe as early as 1982. These European Troop Strength (ETS) ceilings have affected NATO ally perceptions of US commitment to NATO and their own conventional force readiness and sustainability levels. A more significant impact has been felt by the US military forces deployed in Europe as they have had to offset growth in manpower driven by the deployment of new systems and capabilities by out-of-hide manpower decrements. The study reviews congressional intent and the evolution of congressional legislation, examines the impact of ETS ceilings on US NATO allies, and examines the impact on the US military, focusing on the impact to United States Air Forces in Europe.</p>				
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PREFACE

This paper provides a historical perspective on the congressionally-imposed European troop strength ceiling. Since its inception in 1982, the ceiling on the number of US military troops stationed on shore in Europe has had a significant impact on the US military and US European allies. This paper traces the congressional origins of the legislation, its intent, and its impact on both US European allies and US Air Forces in Europe.

I am grateful for the advice and editorial support of Dr Frederick J. Shaw of the Air Force Historical Research Center and Major Ray Conley of the Air Command and Staff College faculty.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Raymond E. Varney is a career intelligence officer, with assignments at HQ SAC, Offutt AFB, NE; 51st Composite Wing, Osan AB, Korea; the Pentagon, Washington, DC; and HQ USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany. In his most recent assignment at HQ USAFE, Major Varney was responsible for managing all command intelligence manpower, personnel, training, and organizational matters. In this position he had frequent interaction with the USAFE and USEUCOM staffs in determining and validating the number of intelligence personnel needed in theater in light of ETS ceilings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER 88-2675

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR RAYMOND E. VARNEY, USAF

TITLE EUROPEAN TROOP STRENGTH: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

I. **PURPOSE:** To provide a historical perspective on the congressionally-imposed ceiling on the number of US military personnel assigned in Europe.

II. **APPROACH:** Using a primarily chronological methodology, the paper examines the original and subsequent intent of Congress, particularly the Senate, in imposing European Troop Strength (ETS) ceilings. Building on a thorough review of that intent, the paper examines the European response to ETS ceilings. Finally, the paper examines the impact of ETS on US military forces, focusing primarily on US Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).

III. **DATA:** Congress first imposed a ceiling on US military forces in Europe in 1982, to be effective in FY83. Subsequent legislation, particularly the Nunn-Roth and Cohen Amendments, was aimed at forcing US NATO allies to live up to their promises of sustained military conventional growth that would have corrected many of the conventional force imbalances that exist vis-a-vis the Warsaw Pact. Congress perceived that the US was contributing more than its fair share of the alliance defensive burden and serious conventional shortfalls were going unresolved. A ceiling of 326,414 personnel has been in effect since FY85.

European reaction was negative. Political and economic realities made three percent real growth in defense budgets unfeasible over the long term, with actual budgets fluctuating year to year. Some allies met the three percent goal some years and missed it the next. Overall, European defense growth has not met the three percent level except in 1984, when lower than expected rates of inflation contributed to meeting the goal. However, NATO's Defense Ministers did agree to

CONTINUED

increase infrastructure spending by approximately 40 percent to facilitate correction of hardened aircraft shelter and ammunition stock shortfalls. Although Europeans deny any cause-and-effect relationship between congressional legislation and the increase in infrastructure spending, some progress was made towards more equitable burden-sharing and correction of conventional force shortfalls.

US military forces in Europe have been hard hit by the legislation as they have had to offset programmed growth with manpower tradeoffs taken out-of-hide. The ceiling came at a time when the US military was fielding the ground launched cruise missile and Pershing II intermediate range nuclear forces. Other force improvements such as Compass Call and the TR-1 system have had to be offset by in-theater forces. USAFE, with most of the growth programs, was particularly hard hit by the ceiling. With no end in sight, the military, under US European Command (USEUCOM) lead, must continue to identify manpower offsets to facilitate the growth of new systems programmed in the Five Year Defense Plan (FYDP).

IV. Conclusions: The European Troop Strength ceiling is a twin edged sword being wielded by Congress. On the one hand, it sends a clear signal to US European allies that the perceived free ride on defense spending will not continue and the allies must work together to equalize burden-sharing and improve conventional military capabilities. On the other hand, ETS ceilings have become an effective tool for micromanaging the Department of Defense (DOD) and forcing them to make some hard force management and budgetary decisions affecting US forces in Europe. DOD arguments against ETS ceilings, no matter how rational, have fallen on deaf ears and Congress shows no sign of being ready to lift the ceiling.

Chapter One

CONGRESS IMPOSES EUROPEAN TROOP STRENGTH (ETS) CEILINGS

ORIGINS OF ETS

The informal origins of ETS ceilings can be traced to the mid-1960s, when Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana) attempted to introduce legislation calling for a drawdown of US military forces in Europe. In contrast to the burden sharing rationale put forth by Senator Stevens and subsequent proponents of ETS ceilings, Senator Mansfield believed the time had come to bring our forces home, stating (in 1974), "The war is over now. It has been 30 years; it is time to come home." (20:7762). The failure of Senator Mansfield to get his proposed legislation through Congress did not negatively affect later efforts to impose ceilings; to the contrary, it highlighted the inequitable burden sharing arrangement for financing a strong NATO alliance.

The formal imposition of ceilings on the number of active US military personnel stationed in Europe originated in the Second Continuing Appropriations Resolution for fiscal year (FY) 1983. In December 1982 Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) attached a rider to this resolution to reflect that he was "... greatly disturbed that the US commitment to European security in terms of force levels and defense expenditures continues to escalate while our NATO allies' share of defense steadily declines." (13:287). Senator Stevens' rider called for a freeze in military force levels in Europe at FY80 levels, however, Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) amended the rider to freeze force levels at the FY82 authorized level of 315,600 (13:287). This first manpower ceiling became effective 30 September 1983.

Satisfied with the results of the FY83 ceiling and the resulting tradeoff of military forces required to stay under the ceiling, Congress renewed the ceiling for FY84. As part of the Department of Defense (DOD) Authorization Act of 1984, Congress permitted an increase to a new ceiling of 320,000, with a 2,600 personnel exclusion to support deployment of the Pershing II and Ground Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) programs. The new ceiling had caveats attached, primarily aimed at ensuring such growth was justified, supported the improvement of NATO's conventional capabilities, and would not be offset by reductions in our NATO allies' forces. In addition, four major analytical studies were levied on the DOD, with certain reports due from the President. These reports would include studies on conventional and tactical nuclear posture, NATO expenditures, and the combat-to-support ratio (22:1129-1132). The second year of ETS ceilings again forced the DOD to identify offsets to facilitate programmed growth.

THE NUNN-ROTH AMENDMENT

The 1984 Nunn-Roth Amendment to the FY85 DOD Authorization Act is the key to understanding the intent and mood of Congress in developing and applying FTS ceilings. This amendment was intended to redress the issues of NATO conventional force readiness shortfalls and inequitable burden sharing, and was not intended to serve as a tool to limit troop strength in Europe per se.

Senator Sam Nunn, one of the most knowledgeable government leaders in the areas of national security and military affairs, and a longtime supporter of the NATO alliance, introduced his amendment in June 1984. His intent was to force US NATO allies to live up to their stated goals of increasing defense spending in each country by at least three percent per year in real terms; their pledge to acquire a 30-day supply of conventional munitions in the Central Region within five years; and their agreement to support what would become the US rapid reinforcement plan (20:7780). These goals had been agreed to by the NATO member countries in 1977 and 1978, with little progress shown towards achieving these goals as of 1984. Nunn and his supporters in the Senate, supporting the Reagan Administration's DOD buildup at well over three percent real growth per year, were unwilling to continue giving their NATO allies a perceived free ride in light of congressional commitments to and support of a strong alliance. Furthermore,

Without the improvements, Nunn warned, NATO could not offer a serious non-nuclear defense against a Soviet conventional invasion. In that case, he reasoned, the alliance's conventional forces on the continent amounted to no more than a "tripwire," whose destruction would trigger nuclear retaliation against the Soviet Union (11:1480).

At this point let's examine the major provisions of the Nunn-Roth Amendment:

- The amendment extended and made permanent the troop ceiling on US ground forces stationed in NATO at a level of 326,414. This cap equaled the level DOD had requested for the end of fiscal year 1985.

- Beginning in 1987 and extending for three years, the ceiling above would be reduced by 30,000 personnel per year unless the Secretary of Defense certified to Congress that the European allies had met one of two goals.

- One goal would be increased allied defense spending at the previously agreed upon rate of three percent per year after inflation.

- An alternative goal would be allied improvements in conventional munition stockpiles and hardened aircraft shelters at a rate of 20 percent of the shortfall per year.

- Further, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) would be asked to certify that the alliance had taken conventional steps that have the effect of raising the nuclear threshold.

- The 30,000 personnel reduction could be modified each year if the European allies were partially successful in meeting the alternative goal above.

allies that they must take a more active path towards conventional force improvement and burden sharing. He said,

. . . the underlying issue at stake here tonight is not whether the allies should do more for the common defense--we all know that they should--but, rather what is the most effective and productive manner in which to elicit greater defense contributions from our allies. I do not profess to have a definitive answer, but I believe my substitute amendment will serve notice to our allies that the Congress is deeply concerned about the burden-sharing problem and will take increasingly stringent action to insure an equitable arrangement (20:7746).

With Nunn-Roth having been defeated, the Senate adopted the Cohen Amendment. The overwhelming vote in favor of this amendment signalled Congressional concern over NATO conventional force readiness, a perceived lowering of the nuclear threshold, and the inequitable burden sharing in support of the NATO alliance.

In the FY86 DOD Authorization Act the Cohen Amendment was amended to permit the Secretary of Defense to exceed the permanent ceiling by not more than one half of one percent for the purpose of achieving sound management in the rotation of members of the US armed forces (23:707). With that minor change the Cohen Amendment remains in force today, driving the ETS ceiling of 326,414 personnel.

SUMMARY OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT

The congressional legislation and debates of 1982-1985 outlined above reflect near unanimous Congressional concern over the military viability and economic equity of the NATO alliance. Although debate centered in the Senate, both houses of Congress voted approval of the DOD Authorization Acts that implemented the key legislation. The House of Representatives deferred to the Senate lead in approving the legislation. The Nunn-Roth Amendment debate sent a signal to the European allies on how far the Congress might go to redress the perceived weaknesses and inequities within the alliance. The Cohen Amendment showed congressional resolve was near unanimous in these areas and the time had come for the allies to step up to their commitments. The US military was not an initial target of this legislation, it was the instrument of national power used to show congressional resolve. As such, the military became a political instrument. However, the military itself soon became much more than an instrument of national policy--it became a target for increasing Congressional oversight.

As the impact of ETS ceilings came to rest squarely on the shoulders of the forces of the US European Command (USEUCOM), subordinate components, and various non-EUCOM (stovepipe) military forces, Congress had a tool to use against the DOD. Congressional micromanagement of the DOD, particularly in all areas related to European force management, force deployment, and systems acquisition was infinitely enhanced by the imposition of ETS ceilings. As stated in an OSD issue paper:

- The Secretary of Defense was required to submit annual reports on US expenditures in support of NATO and allied improvements and contributions to the alliance.

- \$50,000,000 was authorized to support acquisition of European manufactured weapons, subsystems, or munitions for testing against US manufactured items, the ultimate objective being improved NATO interoperability (20:7721).

The potential mandated cuts to military personnel levels in Europe became the focal point for intense Senatorial debate. Senator Nunn and his supporters argued that the amendment gave the European allies three years lead time to react to the provisions of the bill (1987 was first cut period) and that the goals outlined in the amendment had already been agreed to by the allies in 1977 and 1978. Senator Nunn's intent was to strengthen the NATO alliance, not weaken it. By forcing the European allies to live up to their promises, the conventional balance of forces vis-a-vis the Warsaw Pact would be improved, US forces deploying to Europe in time of war would have the ammunition and hardened shelters available to help them fight effectively, and the US government would no longer be burdened with more than its fair share of the financial cost of keeping NATO strong and viable. Nothing was required other than the European allies living up to previous commitments (20:7722-7782). There appeared to be very few members who favored unilateral troop reductions per se (12:20). Opponents of the bill acknowledged the underlying concerns and rationale of the bill but argued that the mandated cuts were a negative political signal to the Europeans that could be perceived as a weakening US resolve to support NATO. Opponents argued that the NATO allies were making efforts to improve their forces and force readiness but economic and political realities made a three percent growth rate unrealistic. Such a signal from the US would actually undermine allied efforts at improving their defense contributions (20:7722-7782).

Intense Presidential and allied lobbying succeeded in getting the Nunn-Roth Amendment defeated by a vote of 55-41. The US Administration claimed the amendment would antagonize NATO members and feed isolationist sentiment in the US (3:24). Tidal McCoy, Assistant Air Force Secretary for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics said that some senators supported the amendment knowing it would never pass (3:24). The accuracy of this statement is problematic. Perhaps the key factor in the defeat of the Nunn-Roth Amendment was the concurrent debate over a similar but less controversial amendment to Nunn-Roth sponsored by Senator William Cohen (D-Maine), which, after the defeat of the Nunn-Roth Amendment was approved by a vote of 94-3 and incorporated into the FY85 DOD Authorization Act.

THE COHEN AMENDMENT

During the debate on the Nunn-Roth Amendment Senator Cohen offered an amendment to their amendment that in essence took all of the Nunn-Roth language but deleted the mechanism imposing an automatic reduction (20:7746). Although acknowledging the failure of the allies to measure up to their commitment, Senator Cohen argued that Nunn-Roth was the wrong way to approach the issue, that Nunn-Roth could weaken and eventually break the alliance (20:7744). Senator Cohen believed the debate over Nunn-Roth was a sufficient signal to the European

. . . many members of Congress felt that the (Defense) Department was not properly managing its European end strength. They felt that we were allowing our strength to grow without adequate justification and without a conscious decision on the part of the leadership of the Department (14:Doc. 931).

Congressional meddling in DOD affairs was to become the much more visible result of ETS ceilings. In Chapter Two we will look at the impact of ETS ceilings on US European allies and in Chapter Three we will look at its impact on the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).

Chapter Two

IMPACT OF ETS CEILINGS ON ALLIED DEFENSE SPENDING

EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION

As expected by the opponents of the Nunn-Roth Amendment, European reaction to such congressional legislation was generally negative, focusing almost exclusively on the burden sharing aspect of the amendment. During the debate on the Nunn-Roth Amendment, the Times of London had already centered on US troop withdrawals and not the primary purpose of Nunn-Roth, namely, the need for NATO to improve its conventional defense capabilities (20:7750). Avoiding the feared negative perceptions by US NATO allies was not to be an easy task.

During debate on the Nunn-Roth Amendment, government representatives of Britain, West Germany, and Italy actively campaigned to defeat the amendment. Their efforts focused on getting the amendment dropped for the sake of allied unity (5:26). West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner viewed this kind of congressional pressure as the wrong way to deal with the problem and as sending the wrong signal to Moscow.

While he [Minister Woerner] agrees with Senator Nunn that Europe needs to do more for the common defense, he does not agree that Europe, or his own country at least, has taken too small a share of the burden. What a fair share is can be interpreted differently . . . Any retreat, or appearance of retreat, by the US from that common defense, from that unity of purpose, will send the wrong signal to Moscow (4:11).

NATO's Secretary General, Lord Carrington, responding to congressional criticism of Europe's fair share contribution to the alliance, stated that such criticism

. . . is greatly exaggerated. If you take from 1980-1984, the Americans have done very much better than the Europeans. If you take 1970-1984, the Europeans have done much better than the Americans. But the fact remains, of course, that we should all do more. And we have taken to heart the particular aspects of the criticisms: hardening of airfields and sustainability--having enough ammunition. . . The Europeans are making an effort to get their act together, partly in response to US criticism and partly to create a European identity that will make the acceptability of defense expenditure easier with their own publics (8:20).

The shortsighted view (1980-1984) by Congress towards contributions to NATO as outlined by Lord Carrington was particularly hard for Europeans to accept. US Defense Department officials were fully in tune with this problem

when they warned that adoption of the Nunn-Roth Amendment would unfairly chastise European allies that had outspent the US on defense in the 1970s but recently had fallen behind because of domestic economic problems (5:26). Senator John Tower, during debate over Nunn-Roth, defended the European position by stating that:

In the decade of the seventies, defense spending declined in real terms in the United States by 20 percent. What did they do in Europe? They increased. Look at the overall trend of the defense spending in Europe over the last 15 years. Ours has gone like this, up and down, fluctuating. Theirs has had a constant upward trend (1:209).

European allies also pointed out that the US was the beneficiary of a "one-way street" in armaments trade, with a 6-1 ratio (1984 figures) in favor of the US. US and allied defense spending was unproportionately benefiting the US economy (10:33).

US European allies also questioned US burden sharing measurements. Many argued that European host nations contribute much more than the burden sharing formula indicated; some hidden costs being real estate, roads, and water, sewage, and electricity hookups (3:23). Further, they argue that the US defense budget is inflated by salaries for the all-volunteer armed forces, European allies having a much more cost effective draft program (11:1480). However, US officials could also claim contributions to the NATO alliance which were not included in the burden sharing formula--the US strategic nuclear umbrella being the most visible. In short, both the US and its NATO allies claimed to make invisible contributions to the alliance. Such arguments were irrelevant to the core issue--conventional readiness must be improved.

Overall, European verbal reaction was negative. However, it can be argued that their financial and military reaction was positive.

IMPACT OF NUNN-ROTH

Despite its defeat on the Senate floor and strong opposition from European leaders, the Nunn-Roth Amendment had a lasting impact on burden sharing within the NATO alliance. Although direct cause and effect relationships cannot be proven and are even denied by US Administration and European spokesmen, the Nunn-Roth Amendment sent a clear signal to US European allies which was received loud and clear. European defense spending did increase in some areas after the Nunn-Roth debate.

As could be expected, European leaders were quick to point out that the threat of Congress was not the driving force behind defense spending increases.

In Brussels, spokesmen for the Administration and the alliance downplayed the significance of Nunn's pressure. Said West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner, "We don't need any American Senator to tell us where deficiencies in our conventional forces may be." (9:58).

Support for this argument downplaying the impact of Nunn-Roth are strengthened by looking at earlier meetings of the NATO Defense Ministers. Senator Richard Lugar recognized increased European efforts and perceptions towards conventional force improvements and put forth this argument during the debate over Nunn-Roth (six months prior to the decision to increase infrastructure spending):

The last two meetings of the NATO Defense Ministers are testimony to the fact that the alliance has begun to shift the focus of its attention from the now successful improvements of NATO's theater nuclear posture to means of enhancing the alliance's conventional posture. There has emerged from those meetings an impressive consensus on the need for better conventional defense through such measures as improved sustainability and exploitation of emerging technologies (1:215).

Despite European denials as to the cause, defense spending did increase after the Nunn-Roth debate. It was in the area of NATO defense infrastructure spending that Nunn-Roth may have had its greatest impact.

At their biannual meeting (less than six months after the Nunn-Roth Amendment debate), 14 of NATO's Defense Ministers agreed to spend \$7.8 billion over the six-year period beginning Jan 1 (1985) for an assortment of improvements, ranging from bomb-proofing aircraft shelters to building better communications networks. That is roughly a 40% increase over the amount spent on infrastructure in the previous six years. The ministers also pledged to increase munitions stocks. By so doing, the alliance ministers were in effect agreeing to US requests for an increase in contributions, with the threat from Congress of possible major troop withdrawals if they did not (9:58).

This improvement in infrastructure spending funded shelters for 70 percent of the aircraft shelters needed for US follow-on forces. Further, the defense ministers agreed to review the infrastructure funding program after two years and to consider increasing it still further. Also, NATO nations further agreed to increase their ammunition stocks to achieve a 30-day supply (7:22).

It is in the area of real growth in defense expenditures that Nunn-Roth shows inconclusive results. After four years of poor European performance in increasing defense expenditures (1980-1983), Congress, referring to the table below, had valid criticism to levy on US allies during debate over Nunn-Roth. However, the countries of NATO Europe did achieve an overall three percent growth rate for 1984 (2:109). Even proponents of Nunn-Roth could agree this growth rate was due to a lower than expected rate of inflation, rather than any congressional pressure. But how could Congress criticize a three percent real growth increase in 1984, even if it was due primarily to lowered inflation and not conscious budget increases?

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Belgium	1.9	0.9	-3.3	-3.0
Canada	5.1	3.1	4.9	5.0
Denmark	0.7	0.6	-0.3	-0.2
France	3.7	3.7	0.9	.9/1.5
Germany	2.3	3.2	-0.8	1.9
Greece	-9.4	22.8	0.1	1.3
Italy	4.9	-0.5	3.2	1.1
Luxembourg	16.3	4.8	3.9	3.5
Netherlands	-2.1	3.3	2.1	2.7
Norway	1.8	2.7	4.1	2.8
Portugal	6.0	0.9	0.5	0.4
Turkey	2.0	1.8	4.6	1.9
United Kingdom	2.8	1.4	6.4	3.0
United States	4.9	4.7	7.6	7.6
Non-US NATO	2.6	2.8	2.3	1.9/2.1
NATO Total	4.0	4.0	5.7	5.6/5.7

TABLE 1: Real Increase in Country Defense Spending
(Percent change from previous year in constant prices)
(As reported by the Congressional Research Service) (20:7730)

In 1985, only three European countries (Italy, Norway, and Turkey) achieved three percent real growth, with the NATO allies achieving an overall one percent real growth rate. In 1986, only five European countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, and Turkey) met or exceeded the three percent goal, with the NATO allies achieving a 1.4 percent real growth rate (6:20). Allied domestic political and economic constraints precluded more allies from meeting the 1978 target of three percent real growth.

US congressional desires could not impact the internal budgetary processes of the European allies, any more than the allies could impact US political, economic, or military deliberations. Within the forum of NATO however, somewhat insulated from domestic pressures and limitations, the European nations could be more in tune with congressional concerns and alliance shortfalls. Pledges made for the common good (increased infrastructure spending) could be defended more easily at home than an arbitrary rate of real growth in defense spending.

Although a causal relationship between the Nunn-Roth Amendment and increased European defense spending cannot be proven, the timing of the Nunn-Roth debate and European spending increases is a striking case of coincidence at its best. It is probably safe to say that Nunn-Roth and the imposition of EIS ceilings accelerated a trend already underway within European defense planning forums. Whether Congress can continue to push for greater allied burden sharing in light of American financial realities and constraints remains to be seen. However, without continued growth in our own defense budget, maintaining the moral high ground may prove difficult.

According to the most recent edition of the Defense Department's Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense, non-US NATO

nations posted an aggregate increase in real growth in defense spending in 1986. At the same time, the US spending levels began a downward trend that will continue as cuts in the Fiscal 1986 and 1987 budget and projected cuts in the Fiscal 1988 budget request begin to register in actual outlays (6:20).

Senator Nunn himself may question the continued viability of the three percent pledge (3:30). If the US fails to meet three percent real growth are ETS ceilings invalidated? Certainly that criteria is invalidated, but Congress, and Senator Nunn in particular, will point to continuing conventional force shortfalls and sustainability problems as sufficient rationale for continuing the ETS ceilings. With no end in sight to the political debate between Congress and the European allies, we turn now to examine the impact of the ceilings on the DOD.

Chapter Three

ETS CEILINGS AND USAFE: AN UNEASY MATCH

OVERVIEW

A legislative broadside to US European allies found its most serious casualties in the US military establishment. General Richard L. Lawson, Deputy Commander in Chief (DCINCEUR), United States European Command (USEUCOM) reported as early as 1985 that:

One of the biggest problems confronting USCINCEUR . . . was the congressionally mandated European Troop Strength ceiling which limits the number of US military personnel stationed in Europe. The limitations imposed by this mandate impact the modernization, readiness, and the political sensitivities of our NATO allies. It could also give the wrong signal to the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies regarding the United States commitment to the defense of Europe (19:viii).

The ceiling hit particularly hard at USAFE. Although US Army Europe (USAREUR) had by far the largest number of personnel in Europe, USAFE had the majority of programmed manpower growth as reflected in the Five Year Defense Plan (FYDP). This chapter examines the impact of ETS ceilings on the military in Europe, focusing on USAFE, one component of the US military affected by the ceiling.

DOD PERCEPTIONS OF ETS CEILINGS

As reflected in the statement above, DOD perceptions of ETS ceilings were extremely negative and in marked contrast to those of the US Congress. An examination of the perceptions held by the DOD and military commands highlights the differing viewpoints.

Perhaps the best summary of the DOD position is reported in the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) document, FY 1988 United States Military Posture:

The congressionally mandated European troop strength ceiling continues adversely affecting European force structure, readiness, modernization, and sustainability. The ceiling ignores the increasing capabilities of the Warsaw Pact, discounts improvements made by our allies, and creates the impression that the United States is expanding nuclear forces at the expense of conventional forces. In addition, since the Atlantic islands are included in the ceiling, it assesses a NATO

penalty for CONUS defense improvements in the Atlantic islands. Conforming to the existing ceilings restricts US and NATO combat capability as we reach the limits of prudent economizing, civilianizing, and reducing troop strength to offset critical growth. As newer, more capable systems with trained personnel to support them are introduced into Europe, the ceiling mandates that other, equally needed combat assets must be returned to CONUS. . . Arbitrary limitation of US military personnel in Europe undermines the gains made in recent years in countering the threat to NATO. It is imperative that the size and composition of our deployed forces in Europe be based upon the threat to US and allied interests, rather than on an arbitrary ceiling. There is no ceiling on Soviet forces (21:94).

Other DOD concerns include the impact of ETS ceilings on undermining the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations and the incorrect perception that force reductions in Europe would reduce overall costs. In fact, the DOD argues that additional costs would be incurred for training and maintaining forces in CONUS, prepositioning additional material in Europe, and obtaining additional airlift and sealift capability to facilitate redeploying forces back to Europe in time of crisis or war (16:Doc V-90)(18:Doc VI-62). The overriding concern for the DOD is that the size and composition of US forces must be adequate to meet three vital objectives:

- Preserve NATO's political integrity.
- Deter aggression
- Militarily defeat any attack upon NATO (15:278).

The DOD viewed Congress as having two motives in implementing ETS ceilings. In addition to the arguments for conventional force capabilities improvements and more equitable burden sharing, the DOD believed Congress imposed the ceilings because they perceived that no one below the Secretary of Defense level was critically reviewing European troop strength. Congress perceived the military was not properly managing its military personnel growth in Europe and felt the DOD was allowing its end strength to grow without an overall management plan (15:278). The DOD argues that in addition to the ETS Management Plan, careful DOD management of European troop levels is performed after consideration and balancing of several factors, including overall Service end strength ceilings, budget and programmatic constraints, and the requirements for forces in other regions (16:Doc V-90).

The DOD argument that the rationale for ceilings put forth by Congress is no longer (if ever) valid has done little to dissuade Congress from maintaining the ceiling. Five years of military opposition to ETS ceilings has seen few tangible victories for the DOD, with congressional satisfaction with the ceilings continuing at a high level. In light of this reality, we turn now to the facts and figures of ETS, and ultimately to a subjective evaluation of the impact of ETS ceilings on USAFE. To begin, we must understand the theater mechanism for managing force levels under the ETS ceiling.

OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF ETS CEILINGS

HQ USEUCOM is the focal point for ensuring US military forces do not exceed the congressional ceiling.

In 1983, the Secretary of Defense . . . tasked the JCS to develop a plan for complying with the Congressionally imposed troop limitations . . . The JCS, in turn, tasked the USCINCEUR to develop this plan. To manage the ETS analysis, the JCS gave the USCINCEUR the authority to review and prioritize all USEUCOM and non-USEUCOM military spaces in Europe. In addition, the USCINCEUR was to develop a plan for managing this authority (19:45).

The Joint Chiefs gave the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic (CINCLANT), in coordination with USCINCEUR, the same authority for Iceland, Greenland, and the Azores--islands included under the ETS ceiling.

On 9 January 1985, the JCS approved the ETS Management Plan Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that places USCINCEUR at the central point of influence and formalizes ETS relationships among the JCS, USCINCEUR, USCINCLANT, the Services, Service components, DOD and other government agencies, and the Intelligence Community (16:Doc V-90).

USEUCOM's role is twofold--arbiter of give-and-take negotiations among subordinate component commands and stovepipe units in theater, and final decision maker on actual force reductions or tradeoffs. The entire process of managing ETS ceilings is designed to ensure that CINCEUR builds and maintains the best possible joint warfighting capability. By preparing strawman ETS decrement lists, staffing these lists through the Services, component commands and stovepipe units (and their parent commands stateside) for comment and amendment, and making the final decisions on optimum force mix under the ETS ceilings, USEUCOM ensures maximum theater combat capability.

Manpower growth designed to support new weapons systems and ongoing program upgrades and expansion comes under repeated close scrutiny to ensure its necessity to the theater warfighting mission. Once manpower growth as programmed in the FYDP is validated as essential to theater force readiness and sustainability, one-for-one tradeoffs must be identified. USEUCOM can direct that one-for-one tradeoffs for new growth come from the gaining Service or component command, or allocate the required offset among any of their subordinate forces or stovepipe units. This flexibility has been an important factor in dispersing the negative impact felt under ETS ceilings.

USAFE serves as executive agent for managing all Service (Air Force) spaces under ETS. As such, they have responsibility for reviewing and prioritizing the manpower of all Air Force units in theater and recommending candidates for elimination, reduction, or trade-off to USEUCOM (16:Doc. V-118). Soliciting the full support of other MAJCOMs has not been a totally successful effort. MAJCOM parochialism complicates USAFE efforts to manage the Air Force manpower allocation as determined by USCINCEUR. Further complicating USAFE efforts are MAJCOM perceptions that ETS is a USAFE problem, that any constraints on their anticipated growth in Europe are a small price to pay for increased funding elsewhere (18:Doc VI-87). Despite these problems, USAFE has contributed to

meeting ETS ceilings each year since 1983. USAFE's contribution has consisted of a balancing of priorities to ensure that while the ETS ceiling is met, essential combat capability and quality of life factors are retained. Efforts focus on finding the best mix of offsets by civilianizing or contracting military positions, trading off in-place forces, or delaying or canceling the improvements various programs were designed to achieve (17:266). This balancing act has not been easy--subjective evaluations have been made, defended to USEUCOM, and even modified by USEUCOM in light of theater-wide priorities.

DIRECT IMPACT ON USAFE

For FY83, the Air Force portion of the ETS ceiling was 84,850, which included 1350 manpower authorizations for GLCM. USAFE met this ceiling by deferring manpower for the Southern Region RED HORSE unit, decommissioning Air Support Radar Teams (ASRTs), and reporting actual personnel manning levels vice authorized manpower. The total FY83 Air Force decrement was 3,295 (16:Doc V-90).

For FY84, USAFE met the ETS ceiling by eliminating bare-base equipment planned for Italy and Turkey, reducing manpower for NATO Prepositioned Procurement Package (PPP) by 50%, decommissioning LORAN, returning two squadrons of OV-10s to CONUS, eliminating spaces from the command drug deterrence (Counterpush) program, reducing functions at RAF Wethersfield, eliminating Aircraft Battle Damage Repair (ABDR) growth, reducing management headquarters positions, and reducing non-EUCOM MAJCOM authorizations. The last reduction was proposed under the executive agent status above. The total FY84 Air Force decrement allocation was 2,704 reductions (16:Doc V-90), however, as the recipient of most of the programmed growth for FY84, overall Air Force manning actually increased to 89,900. In effect, USAFE grew over 7,700 spaces in new manpower but had to give back 2,704 from lower priority programs to stay under the ETS ceiling. The raise in the ETS ceiling from 315,600 to 320,000 facilitated most of this net growth, with USEUCOM taking the rest of the cuts from non-Air Force assets.

For FY85, Air Force growth in theater continued to grow overall (over 93,000 spaces authorized). However, USAFE was still required to identify military offsets from lower priority programs and manpower. USAFE met this offset requirement by contracting flight simulator maintenance, closing the Weapons Training Detachment (WTD) at Aviano AB, Italy, reducing the Tactical Air Control System (TACS), and reducing MUNSS manpower (18:Doc VI-62).

For FY86, USAFE met an offset target of 2,667 by civilianizing a total of 1,766 military positions (of which 190 were non-USAFE spaces), delaying or cancelling selected growth, and taking cuts in other USAF MAJCOM manning levels (18:Doc VI-62). The overall Air Force ceiling grew minimally to 93,297.

For FY87, USAFE's offset target was 2,823, met through a long list of minor manpower cuts in a variety of manpower programs. The overall Air Force ceiling grew minimally to 93,322. FY88 and beyond ETS adjustments are still being worked.

In spite of the cuts listed above, Air Force authorizations in Europe have grown approximately 10,000 spaces since 1983--growth at a time when the clear intent of Congress was to see no growth. USAFE can rationally argue that almost all of this growth was due to the deployment of GLCM and they have had to identify approximately 10,000 spaces for decrement to facilitate other growth programs, to include in-theater deployment of COMPASS CALL, TR-1, and F-16 aircraft and supporting systems. The trade-offs were hard and the process painful. Complicating USAFE efforts were three compounding issues that directly interwove with the ETS ceiling: A possible single service ceiling, civilianization, and the linking of ETS with FYDP actions.

ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE A SINGLE SERVICE CEILING

In October 1984, the Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) Report on the FY85 DOD Appropriation Bill recommended no funds be provided to finance any increase in Air Force personnel in Europe. The report stated it was the clear intent of the committee to limit the Air Force manpower to 89,900, the FY84 end strength (16:Doc V-90). The SAC recommendation reflected concern that Air Force growth in Europe to accommodate GLCM was exaggerated and unnecessary (16:Doc V-90). Although the SAC report was not law, the Secretary of the Air Force General Counsel recommended that the Air Force comply.

CINCSAFE, General Donnelly protested strongly, stating,

The ceiling on military personnel assigned in NATO Europe adversely impacts USEUCOM combat capability. However, a single service ceiling is infinitely more damaging. It prevents USCINCEUR from selecting the optimum land/air/sea mix for the greatest joint combat capability. A ceiling determined outside the context of USCINCEUR's overall warfighting capability ignores the balance, synergism and impact of the components fighting together. . . . It is important to note that Congress did not apportion the 326,414 ceiling by service. . . . USCINCEUR must be allowed to determine the service mix of his forces (14:Doc 915).

CINCEUR, General Bernard W. Rogers, also criticized the single service ceiling:

. . . . A unilateral Air Force ceiling will have a further negative impact and would reduce our ability to defend ourselves. Since many of the capabilities inherent in the Air Force systems programmed for Europe would have to remain in the US, our NATO allies are bound to perceive such action as evidence of our apparent reneging on our pledge regarding improvement of conventional Air Forces at the very time we are trying to encourage them to increase their contributions (19:48).

The Secretary of Defense supported the Air Force, advising CINCEUR to "concern himself only with the Congressional theater constraint of 326,414, and not to worry about the USAF proposed ceiling of 89,900." (19:49). The single service ceiling was averted and never subsequently introduced under force of law, however, the SAC drove a FY87 \$25 million cut to the Air Force budget, noting

USAFE's disregard of their earlier call for a freeze (18:Doc VI-61). The budget cut was managed but another problem loomed--civilianization.

CIVILIANIZATION AND ETS CEILINGS

The issue of civilianization in relation to ETS ceilings has had an erratic history. From early USAFE efforts to avoid increased civilianization to later large scale civilianization the issue has been complicated.

In 1983 certain elements within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics) began pushing Air Force civilianization as a means to satisfy European troop strength ceilings. . . USAFE stated that Congress might view civilianization as an attempt to sidestep the European troop strength ceiling. Total US military and civilian levels would indicate a continued growth of manpower and dollars without an increase in allied contributions. A likely response would be a subsequent congressional ceiling preventing further civilianization, which would force USAFE to identify military tradeoffs for growth with an already over-civilianized force structure. The command also believed that civilianization degraded its readiness for war (13:301-302).

Despite early USAFE opposition to increased civilianization, political realities forced USAFE to reevaluate its position. In August 1984, faced with the prospect of possible reductions that did not take into account the optimum mix of military and civilian personnel, General Donnelly, then the new CINCPACAF, directed an increase in civilianization in order to prevent further force structure cuts. The FY86 ETS management gameplan reflected extensive military-to-civilian tradeoffs for the first time.

USAFE identified 1,576 positions for conversion in FY86, expecting any conversions to be fully funded. However, the Air Force had begun an effort to reduce the number of civilians worldwide, complicating USAFE civilianization efforts. "At the same time one office at the Pentagon was pushing USAFE to begin the military-civilian conversion, another office requested USAFE's commander to identify possible civilian positions for reduction." (15:280). General Donnelly requested exemption from this action but was unsuccessful. The impact on USAFE was doubly painful--for a deletion of 1,576 military manpower authorizations to meet the FY86 ETS ceiling the command received only 688 civilian positions, a loss of critical military manpower and a further loss of 688 civilians from the work force (15:280). The 688 FY86 civilianization slots were deferred from implementation until FY87 and FY88.

Despite early USAFE objections that civilianization circumvented the intent of Congress, civilianization became an integral part of the ETS ceiling management gameplan. However, Congress had one more wrench to throw into the picture:

While Congress directed the Department of Defense to use civilianization as a method to enhance its force structure within current ceilings and streamline manpower requirements in Europe, Congress also perceived that DOD had used civilian program growth to

circumvent the European troop strength ceilings imposed since December 1982. Thus, with the FY87 Appropriations Bill approved in October (1986), Congress limited the number of civilian work years which DOD could have in overseas areas to their FY86 levels (17:270).

The verdict is still out on the impact this latest congressional action will have on USAFE. Increased civilianization within theater, long pushed as an option to minimize the impact of ETS ceilings, has been essentially eliminated as an option for future use.

ETS AND FYDP CONSOLIDATION

In 1985 ETS decrement decisions were incorporated into the annual Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS). USAFE was strongly opposed to this decision.

We (USAFE) would be philosophically opposed to linking ETS decrement decisions to PPBS actions. The PPB system should produce an accurate portrayal of the resources needed to achieve defense objectives. Interjecting ETS into the PPBS distorts the process of identifying our priority requirements to the Congress and surrenders the issue before it is addressed by the legislature. By definition, ETS then becomes an Administration fiscal proposal and not a congressionally imposed ceiling (16:Doc V-116).

Despite the logic of the USAFE argument, USCINCEUR directed incorporation, a decision which has had a profound impact on programming for future force upgrades within theater. Projected manpower growth requirements in the outyears are offset within the command prior to submission in order to stay under the ETS ceiling.

SUMMARY

As outlined above, ETS ceilings have had a profound impact on USAFE. Each year CINCUSAFE is forced to prioritize every manpower authorization in theater and identify slots for deletion to help offset programmed growth. After five years of prioritization and ongoing staff actions to prioritize years into the future, USAFE is running out of candidates to cut that will not severely impact combat capability. Some could argue that that point has been reached and exceeded already, Congress may believe there is a long way to go. Either way, it is obvious that there is a point beyond which cuts cannot continue if we are to avoid the perception that overall USAFE force readiness and responsiveness are declining; a politically negative perception if held by US allies, a military dangerous perception if held by the Warsaw Pact. This paper offers no answer to this dilemma; in the end the impact of the ETS ceiling is subjective and the DOD has not been able, despite a rational and thorough campaign, to convince a skeptical Congress that the value of the ceiling has passed.

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